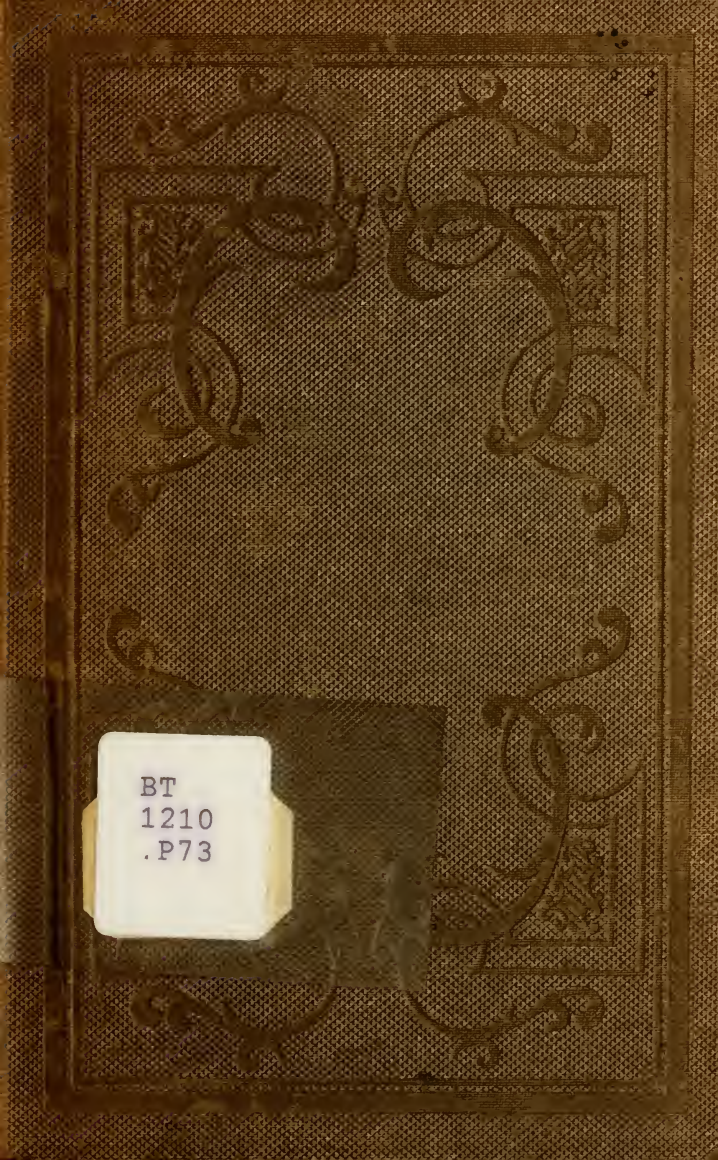




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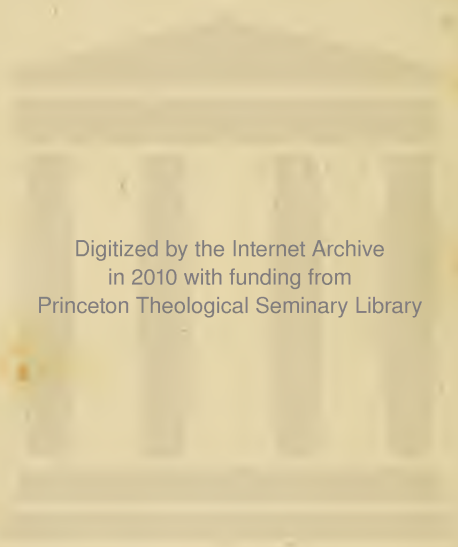
BIBLE TRUE,

AND

INFIDELITY WICKED.

BY WM. S. PLUMER, D. D.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
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Nothing strictly new can be pertinently said on the subject of this little treatise. The reader will not, therefore, expect originality. All that has been attempted is to group together the most important truths on the subject in a form more condensed than usual. The author has not written for the learned. It would have been much easier to satisfy himself with a more extended discussion of every topic ; but such a course would have been fatal to his chief object, which was, to furnish plain people, who have not much leisure, with a brief manual in a popular form. Such as it is, it is commended to God, whose blessing alone can make it useful.

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THE BIBLE TRUE.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IN WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD THE SUBJECT BE STUDIED?

To satisfy the captious, to teach the wayward, to persuade the stubborn, and to please the malignant, are four impossible things. On the other hand, it is easy to teach the docile, to satisfy the candid, to guide the meek, and to solve honest doubts. In all investigations of truth, he, whose state of mind is best, will make the most progress. "A word entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool." We should not be surprised, therefore, when we find in religious inquiries the same variety and diversity of results, which are seen in the character of those who make them. "Temper is every thing," is a saying as true in religion as in any thing else. Neither the kingdom of science, nor the kingdom of heaven, is open to those who have not the spirit of a little child. God reveals to babes, who are willing to learn, things, of which the wise and prudent remain ignorant through a haughty spirit. Let every man see that his heart is right.

RIGHT USE OF REASON.

The power of reasoning distinguishes men from brutes, and the habit of reasoning distinguishes wise men from fools.

The Bible never makes war upon right reason. On the contrary, it encourages and demands the best exercise of all our faculties. We are, indeed, to use our reason in a lawful manner, setting it no impossible tasks, and carefully distinguishing between the influence of prejudice or passion, and the dictates of a sound mind. The uses of reason in regard to a revelation are chiefly these: to ascertain whether God has given us a revelation; and, if so, to learn what that revelation is. To inquire whether God should make known to us a given matter does not belong to the province of reason; for if we knew beforehand what ought to be in the Bible, we did not need a revelation. Indeed, that which is already known to a man, cannot be revealed to him. But we may ask, yea, we are bound to ask, Is the Bible from God? and, under responsibilities as solemn as eternity, our reason is summoned to try that question. If we decide that question affirmatively, let us then ask, What is that revelation? what does it teach? what does it promise? what does it threaten? what does it require? In these questions there is full scope for the exercise of all our rational faculties.

THE HUMAN MIND WEAK.

In prosecuting these and all inquiries on the subject of religion, it is proper always to remember, that the human mind is feeble and very liable to err, and that sometimes "a painted falsehood in many respects bears the marks of high probability, and often triumphs over naked truth."

"A mind which has no restraint from a sense of its own weakness, of its subordinate rank in the creation, and of the extreme danger of letting the imagination loose upon some subjects, may very plausibly attack every thing the most excellent and venerable. It would not be difficult to criticize the creation itself, and if we were to examine the divine fabrics by our ideas of reason and fitness, and to use the same method of attack by which some men have assaulted revealed religion, we might with as good color, and with the same success, make the wisdom and power of God in his creation appear to many no better than foolishness. There is an air of plausibility, which accompanies vulgar reasonings and notions, taken from the beaten circle of ordinary experience, that is admirably suited to the narrow capacities of some, and to the laziness of others."

There can be no greater error than a belief that human reason is of itself a sufficient light and guide in religion. The history of the world for several thousand years abundantly demonstrates this. All the wisest of the heathen acknowledged as much.

Dr. Young well describes modern infidels, when he says, "The sufficiency of human reason is the golden calf, which these men set up to be worshipped; and in the frenzies of their extravagant devotion to it, they trample on venerable authority, strike at an oak with an ozier, the doctrine of God's own planting and the growth of ages, with the sudden and fortuitous shoots of imagination, abortive efforts of an hour."

Saurin says of such, "What surprises me, what stumbles me, what frightens me, is to see a diminutive creature, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the Supreme Being; oppose the intelligence, that sitteth at the helm of the world; question what he affirms, dispute what he determines, appeal from his decisions, and, even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are beyond his capacity. Enter into thy nothingness, mortal creature! What madness animates thee? How darest thou pretend, thou who art but a point, thou whose essence is but an atom, to measure thyself with the Supreme Being, with him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain?"

If the child cannot comprehend the wisdom of the plan by which a vast empire is governed, it is surely no great act of humility for creatures of a day to submit their understandings in matters relating to the government of the universe and the counsels of

eternity. Nothing is more proper than that the ignorant should be learners, and that the blind should have guides.

KINDS OF PROOF.

It is proper here to make a few remarks upon the different kinds of evidence. Lord Bacon says, "The rigor and curiosity in requiring the more severe proofs in some things, and chiefly the facility in contenting ourselves with the more remiss proofs in others, have been amongst the greatest causes of detriment and hinderance to knowledge." Nothing is more unreasonable than mixing the different kinds of evidence. Geometry is a beautiful science, but its very nature confines it to magnitudes. No man can thereby prove that Victoria is queen, that Virgil wrote the *Æneid*, that air and water are compound substances, that a murder was committed, or a battle fought. So you cannot prove the Bible true or untrue, you can prove nothing on the subject of a revelation by the exact sciences. There is, therefore, amazing folly in the objection that the Bible lacks a species of evidence which is found to sustain some branches of knowledge.

Whether the proof of a truth be drawn from consciousness, from sensation, from intuition, from demonstration, or from testimony, is not to a wise man a matter of importance, provided it be ample and adapted to the nature of the subject. If Christian-

ity has all its *appropriate* evidences, we ought to be satisfied. If we cannot by demonstration or intuition prove it true, yet if its evidences are sufficient to satisfy the candid, who make war on their sinful inclinations, this is sufficient. Though you cast pearls before swine, they will but trample them under their feet. Though you give that which is holy unto the dogs, they will turn and rend you. Conviction from testimony is as philosophical and proper as from demonstration.

A MYSTERY NOT A CONTRADICTION.

Nor ought men to complain when asked to distinguish between a mystery and a contradiction. He who believes in nothing which he cannot fully understand, will certainly have a very short creed. He cannot believe in anatomy, in animal life, in gravitation, in vegetation, in electricity, if he refuses to assent to the existence of things mysterious. God himself is the greatest mystery in the universe, and he who rejects all mystery, must be an atheist. It is our duty carefully to ask, not whether we fully understand every thing belonging to what we believe, but whether the evidence, on which we believe it, is sufficient. An objection drawn from mystery alone is insignificant. A religion free from all mystery must be a human invention.

But to establish a contradiction in any matter is to render belief impossible. No man can believe

that a thing exists and does not exist at the same time and in the same sense, nor that black is white, nor that a part is equal to the whole. If the Scriptures contained contradictions, we could not receive them as true, although in the mysteries of revelation we may even rejoice. There is no greater mystery than the love of God in giving his Son to die for us. We cannot give it up, simply because it transcends all human love and comprehension.

THE BIBLE OR NOTHING.

Whether we receive the Bible or not, it is clear that if we reject it, we have not on earth any system of religion worthy of reception. If we give up the divinity of the Scriptures, we seek in vain to affix the seal of God to any other form of belief and worship, known to men. If the volume, which we call the true light, be a fiction, man is left to grope his way to the judgment-seat of God without a lamp to shine upon his path. This fact invests our inquiry with the most solemn interest.

The trial of the truth of the Bible is the trial of man for his immortal life, and all his highest hopes. If we give up this book, there remains to us nothing but the blindness of superstition and imposture, and a long series of overwhelming degradations. It is certainly a wild madness, which can lead any one to suppose that human nature can ever be elevated by proving it on a level with beasts, by confounding

good and evil, vice and virtue, by annihilating all expectation of righteous recompense. Maniacs never held a wilder sentiment than that piety was promoted by denying Providence, by shaking confidence in the justice, holiness, or goodness of God.

The moment men forsake the Bible they are at sea without a compass. If Christianity be a fiction, it is infinitely preferable to the fictions of heathenism, or the dogmas of that class of modern writers, who publish themselves to the world as philosophers. If Christianity be a fiction, it must be confessed that it at least breathes a very remarkable spirit of good-will, and produces an incalculable amount of happiness to society, of quiet to the mind, and of pleasing hope for the future. On the other hand, the sum of all that infidelity clearly teaches is contained in this short creed, "I believe in all uncertainty."

OUR SCRIPTURES GENUINE.

In an argument on the subject of the truth of the Bible, the first question is, "Have we the same Scriptures which the early Christians had?" I answer affirmatively, and prove it just as we prove that any writing now in our possession is the same that went under the same name in former times, and just as men, who shall live 1,800 years hence, if the world shall stand so long, will prove that they have the same Bible that we have now. Let a man prove

that we have the Commentaries of Cæsar, or the Orations of Cicero, and not some spurious works passing under their names, and by a thousand-fold stronger evidence shall it be proven that we have the genuine epistles of Paul, the genuine prophecies of Isaiah, the genuine gospels, and other sacred writings originally published by their authors.

One way of proving that we have the same books which bore a given name in former days, is by comparing modern with ancient copies.

There lies before me a work first published in A. D. 1643. Now, if I should meet with a new edition of that book, and should wish to know whether it were correct, I would compare the last with the first, and form my judgment accordingly. To apply this argument, I would observe that we have manuscript copies of the New Testament, supposed to be as old as A. D. 500. These copies correspond in all points of fact or doctrine with our own Scriptures. Owing to the wasting persecutions which took place for the express purpose of exterminating Christianity, we have not any copies of the Scriptures in the Greek language more than about thirteen hundred and fifty years old. Besides, the early Christians—and we are following their example—never thought of depositing in some sacred and secure place a copy of the word of God, for the purpose of giving to posterity an accurate copy of their sacred books. Indeed, no place intended as a

depository of Christian monuments would have been either sacred or secure. The attempt to have made it so would have excited both suspicion and malignity. Moreover, the art of printing not having been then invented, all books, sacred and profane, were scarce, and all copies were of necessity made out in the slow and expensive method of handwriting. Accordingly, complete copies of the Scriptures were possessed only by respectable churches, and by a few rich or learned men.

Even down to the time of the invention of the art of printing, a complete copy of the Scriptures could not be procured in England at a cost less than the aggregate hire of a common laborer for thirteen years. It is, then, no wonder that we have not a larger number of ancient manuscript copies of the sacred writings. The wonder rather is, that we have any.

The Bible, like the burning bush seen by the patriarch, has been in the midst of the fire, and has not been consumed. Spiritual and political despotisms have summoned kings and cabinets, armies and the rabble, to extirpate the word of God. It has often been a capital offence to be found possessing the Bible. Yet this book has lived. Many very ancient copies have come down to us, and these agree with our Scriptures.

But this is not all, for in early times the Scriptures were translated into different languages. Of

these translations I shall notice but one, namely, the *Syriac*. This translation, as learned men agree, has been in use in Syria ever since the second century. See Michaelis. The internal evidence, the traditions of the East, and many very ancient manuscript copies found in different places, establish for it at least a very great antiquity. About two hundred and thirty years ago, the Bishop of Antioch, in Syria, sent a copy of this translation into Europe to be printed, and since that time the work is found in the library of every clergyman of considerable learning. Several other translations have been made at different, though early periods of the Christian era; and all of these contain the history and doctrine of revelation, in a degree not equal indeed to the original, but in sufficient accuracy to prevent fatal mistake. Indeed, the ancient translations will well bear a comparison with an equal number of those that are more modern. So that, if we had no ancient manuscripts, and had to depend for our knowledge of the Gospel entirely on translations, we should have as correct sources of information as the mere English reader has of a history of France, originally written in the language of that country, and carefully rendered into English.

Furthermore, all of the books of the New Testament have been largely quoted, from early times down to the present, so that if every translation and every copy, written and printed, ancient and mod-

ern, were entirely destroyed, and all the books which have been written for fifteen hundred years were instantly burned up, the Gospel would not be lost ; for it might be gathered from books written within three hundred years of the ascension of our Saviour. This is one of the highest kinds of proof appropriate to such a subject. Three writers, living in different countries, quote the same sentence from an old writer for purposes quite diverse. A man who never saw the original may reasonably believe that the agreeing quotations are correctly made.

This is the common practice of mankind, even in the most important matters. This kind of evidence increases with the number of quotations, with the distance of time and place at which they were made, and with the variety and contrariety of object had in view by those who made them. Our Scriptures have been quoted not only by three, but by many writers, at different times, for different purposes, some friendly, some hostile. These quotations contain the same things in substance. We can be at no loss for the substance of the Gospel.

Numerous commentaries on the Scriptures, harmonies of their contents, and catalogues of them, similar to those found in modern authors, were early written and published. These constitute a mass of evidence, which it requires indeed learning and candor duly to estimate ; but which, when properly weighed, gives an overwhelming force to

the argument for the genuineness of the sacred writings.

As to the books of the Old Testament, it is not necessary to dwell on the proofs of their genuineness. It is sufficient to state, that all history represents the Jews as exceedingly careful in correctly preserving the sacred text. When a copy was made out, not only the number of words, but even the number of letters in it was counted, and compared with the original, in order to prevent mistake.

THE SEPTUAGINT.

It is proper also to state, that the Jewish Scriptures were translated into Greek about two hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ, by order of that great patron of learning and of commerce, Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt; that the work was executed with great care; that when completed, it was deposited in the largest library then in the world, the Alexandrian; that Jesus Christ and his apostles quoted this translation; and that it corresponds with our copies of the Hebrew Scriptures as nearly as any translation commonly does with the original. This work, called the Septuagint, has ever since been in the possession of scholars, and is highly esteemed by learned men; so that if we had no Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament Scriptures would not be lost.

TESTIMONY OF OPPOSING SECTS.

Before and since the coming of Christ, there were true and false teachers, and various controvertists and sects, widely differing from each other. And yet Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, quoted the same copy of the Scriptures. Since the coming of Christ, the Jews and Christians, who differ on the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, a doctrine confessed on both hands to be fundamental to their respective systems, do still read, study, and quote the same editions of the Hebrew Bible. The Jews and Christians have closely watched each other ever since the days of the apostles, yet do they now agree in receiving the same sacred text. So heretics and Christians have watched each other in every age, yet no material corruption of the text of the Old or New Testament has taken place. It could not have been even attempted without an exposure which would have ruined the credit of any man or sect.

Let me illustrate. A. B. dies, leaving a will and seven children. Each of the children takes a copy of the will, leaving the original in the hands of a common friend, whose house is destroyed and the will with it, before it is admitted to record. Each of the heirs produces his copy of the will in court; the handwriting of each is different; the spelling of some words is different; the punctuation does not in all cases agree; yet the true intention of the testator is manifest from each copy. Whatever may

be the decision of the judges in the case, surely the heirs cannot doubt what the will of the testator was; and if they agree to divide the estate by it, surely his views and the ends of law and justice will be as well answered as if the original had been preserved.

Just so the millions of Christians appeal to the same copies of God's word, as containing the charter of their hopes, the rule of their lives, and the standard of their creed. Higher evidence of the genuineness of our Scriptures is not in the nature of things to be expected. No other records have ever been esteemed so sacred; none have ever had so many safeguards to their purity. It is, therefore, safe to conclude, that our Bible is the same which the early Christians had.

A REVELATION REASONABLE

There is nothing absurd in the supposition that He who made us should instruct us. It is to this day a question among scholars, whether language was at first a human invention or a revelation from God. Those who contend that it is a human invention, have never argued that God could not, or if necessary, would not have revealed it to man. Surely, they would not have overlooked so obvious an argument if it had possessed any weight.

To use an illustration : I speak not of what God did, but of what he might have done. If God may, in the judgment of reason, have taught us language, may he not teach us the knowledge of himself ? If we are capable of communing with him, is he not full of condescension, and may he not commune with us ? If he teaches the ant and the bee to provide for winter, why may he not teach man to provide for eternity ? It is also according to the divine plan generally to teach truths gradually, and by a few men at first. The world stood nearly six thousand years before the use of the mariner's compass, the art of printing, the true system of astronomy, the use of steam, and the use of electricity were known. And when they were at last well known, it was by means of a few men. In revealing the divine will on religious subjects to a few men able to teach others, God is but following an analogy which runs through all his dispensations.

WHY WERE THE SCRIPTURES RECEIVED AS DIVINE ?

The question then arises, On what evidence were the books of Scripture received as a revelation from God ? On this subject many false things have been said by the enemies of revelation. In answer it may be stated, that the divine authority of the Scriptures was attested by numerous

MIRACLES.

God gave sight to all who do see. Why can he not give it to a man born blind? He gave life to all who live. Why can he not give it to the dead? Against the existence of miracles there can lie no valid objection. It is reasonable that men, sent by God to teach their fellows, should be able to attest their commission in the most impressive manner. There is no absurdity in the belief of miracles.

Mr. Hume, indeed, has said that miracles are contrary to experience. If he means that miracles are contrary to our experience in this day, it is admitted. But if he means that miracles were contrary to the experience of the early Christians, he does but miserably beg the whole question. These men testified to the existence of miracles, and thousands of them, in proof of their honesty and sincerity as witnesses, joyfully suffered all the pains of martyrdom. It is not possible to find witnesses more competent for their intelligence and opportunities of observation, or more credible for their honesty, for the disinterested purity of their lives, and for their agreement among themselves. No man has ever detected any disqualification in the witnesses, or shown how better witnesses could be found among men.

Neither is there any presumption against miracles from any lack of power in the Almighty. As Omnipotence has established, so it can suspend the

laws of nature. Nothing is too hard for God. The only question, which we can with propriety raise, is, "Whether God is *willing*, in any circumstances, to work a miracle?" The truth on this point can only be learned by God's declaring that he is willing, or by his working the miracle. If he work the miracle, his declaration of his willingness to do so is unnecessary. When one of the ancients denied motion, his adversary refused to argue the point; but arose and walked across the room, thus silencing all sophistry. So, if a man deny that God is willing to work miracles, and he be answered by their exhibition before his eyes, or by the sure records of history, his doubts may properly cease. Matters of fact in things external to us can be known only in two ways, either by our own senses, or by the testimony of others.

The miracles establishing the truth of Christianity were properly wrought at the time of its first propagation. Had they not been wrought until this day, all who have gone before us would have been destitute of sufficient evidence of the truth of the Gospel. And had miracles been so multiplied and continued as that every man, down to our day, should have witnessed many of them, they would by their very commonness probably have lost their power over the human mind, and wicked men would have said that they proved nothing, because they were a part of the laws of nature; or if their strangeness

had still arrested the mind, it would have been kept in an awe amounting to terror, and thus freedom of choice would have been impaired. We are, therefore, from the nature of the case, left to the testimony of others, who were eye-witnesses of the miracles wrought in attestation of the truth of the inspired writings. That Jesus Christ allowed the people to believe that he wrought miracles, no sober-minded man can deny. All history, whether by friends or foes, confirms this truth. His disciples abundantly testify to this point. Now, if Jesus Christ intended to make the people believe that he wrought miracles, he either did perform them, or he was an impostor.

If he were an impostor, there never has been one like him. Never has malice found a flaw in his character. Infidels themselves, among whom are Paine and Jefferson, acknowledge that Jesus Christ was a benevolent and just person. Then, if he was good, he was not a deceiver, but a true and sincere man, and did all he claimed to have done. Yet he often claimed obedience to his authority, on the ground of his miracles.

The enemies of Christianity admitted that Christ did do those things which we call miracles. The Jews, who witnessed them, admitted them, but ascribed them to satanic power. Celsus, the first infidel writer, admitted them, but compared them to the tricks of the magicians. Porphyry, the second

infidel, did not deny them, but said the Scriptures contained contradictions. Julian was emperor of Rome in the fourth century. He was an apostate from Christianity, and manifested a bitterness against it, which has hardly ever been surpassed, or even equalled. He used all his power and all his talents—and both were vast—to oppose the word of God. In writing against the Christians, he does not pretend that no miracles had been performed by Christ. In two places he distinctly admits them to have been wrought. He admits that “he rebuked the winds, walked on the seas, healed lame and blind people,” etc. Flavius Josephus, a Jew, who wrote about sixty years after the commencement of Christianity, speaking of a period some years previous, says, in his History, L. 18, cap. 3, sec. 3, “At that time lived Jesus, a wise man, if he may be called a man, for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such as received the truth with pleasure.” This passage is in every copy of Josephus now extant. It may be safely asserted that there is not a fragment of history, either contemporary with Christ and his apostles, or extant within many ages of their time, which disproves, or tends to disprove the fact that those things, which we call miracles, were wrought to establish the truth of Christianity, although some are found, who admit the facts, but attempt to account for them as caused by magic or by satanic influence.

By the undeniable character of the miracles wrought, not only were all doubts removed from the minds of Christ's immediate followers, but enemies were confounded and silenced, or put to rage and made to gnash their teeth; and in tens of thousands of cases enemies were converted into friends, and died excruciating deaths rather than deny what they knew to be the truth. Our countryman, Rittenhouse, well observed, that all the miracles of Christ were benevolent; and we know that they were wrought not only at night, but generally by day, in the open air, and under the light of heaven, not only in the presence of friends, but in the midst of shrewd, cunning, and deadly enemies. There was no room for deception. Legerdemain never gave sight to the blind, never made the lame man walk and leap, never raised the dead.

MIRACLES PROVE A REVELATION.

Admitting miracles to have been wrought, the question arises, "How do they become a proof of a revelation?" The answer is, that the argument is based on two suppositions, to deny either of which renders it impossible to reason on this subject. The first is, that none but God can work a miracle. The other is, that God loves truth, and will not exert his power miraculously to establish error and falsehood. If a man think that any other than the power, which ordained the laws of nature, can suspend them, or

that a good, true, and loving God would suspend the laws of nature to confirm a fraud upon mankind, he is not prepared for any argument on the evidences of Christianity, but needs to be instructed in the first principles of natural religion, which show by innumerable proofs that God is good. He denies axioms in the argument, for Nicodemus expressed not only his own views, but the common sense of mankind, upon ascertaining the reality of miracles, when he said, "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

MOHAMMED.

"But," says one, "did not Mohammed work miracles, and thus establish his imposture?" I answer, he did not. He said that God had wrought miracles enough by the prophets, and by Jesus Christ, and that God had sent him to teach. This would have been good reasoning, if he had taught the doctrines of Christ and the prophets. He did, indeed, assert that the Koran itself was a miracle. But this is evidently a play upon a word, and not a serious argument; or, if it be the latter, then we disprove it by the *Iliad* of Homer, or the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, which are much more sublime, but which no man ever regarded as proofs of any thing beyond an elevated genius, and much careful study.

Mohammed's great argument, as every well-informed man knows, was the sword, not miracles. On that he relied, as the history of his life shows.

POPISH MIRACLES.

The miracles pretended to be wrought in the dark ages, and in more modern times, in support of superstition, are wholly destitute of the support of credible and competent testimony. They were wrought secretly, or in the presence of those only, who already embraced the superstition, which was intended to be supported by them; or it took years to accomplish one miracle; or when the miracle was pronounced complete, the effect said to have been wrought was imperfect and doubtful. On one or more of these principles, or on those equally valid, the spurious character of every miracle mentioned by Mr. Gibbon and other enemies of the truth may be easily shown.

PROPHECY.

Leaving this brief sketch of the argument from miracles, let us look at the argument for the truth of the Bible, drawn from prophecy. This argument, like the last, is based upon two suppositions, neither of which a reasonable man will deny. One is, that prescience belongs to God only. The other is, that God will not reveal the secrets of futurity for the purpose of misguiding his creatures. He, who grants

these two truths, needs but to have a real prophecy presented to his mind, to be satisfied that its author speaks by the authority of God. Things in their very nature contingent, and, for their accomplishment, not dependent on any second cause now in existence, do, if foretold, imply foreknowledge in the being foretelling them. If he who prophesies expressly disclaims all honor as due to himself, and ascribes his prophecies to the teachings of God, and if they prove true, it is evident that God is with such a man.

In the foregoing principles we have the necessary distinctions between inspired prophecy and that unusual sagacity which is sometimes found in men. Soon after the battle of Waterloo, Mr. Canning said, "The next contest in Europe will be a war of principle." He had good reasons for saying so, drawn from the state of things known to all the world. His prediction was true, and was in a few years proved to be so. But he did not pretend that it was inspired. It was the product of his own reasonings.

The same gentleman, in 1826, pronounced the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies utterly impossible. Here he reasoned with perhaps as much accuracy on the principles and facts before him; but he left out of view the public temper, which soon became much changed; and his prediction failed. Had he claimed divine inspiration in the case, he would have been justly numbered among

the lying prophets. As it is, we only say his sagacity was not equal to his subject. He was not, he did not claim to be a prophet.

Now, there are prophecies in the Scriptures, amounting to several hundreds, of so distinct and remarkable a character as to be inapplicable to any but the times, the places, or the persons, to which the Christian world generally applies them.

UNIVERSAL EMPIRES.

Some of these prophecies contain an outline of all the empires, called universal monarchies, which have ever existed. They describe their character, their extent, and their end, with a minuteness that leaves the historian little else to do than to fill up the outline by the events, which are remarkably well known. Let any man read Rollin's Ancient History, and he must be sceptical indeed, if he does not rise from the perusal convinced of the truth of all here asserted.

CYRUS.

Some of these prophecies relate to particular persons and places. Those respecting Cyrus and the taking of Babylon were written two hundred years before his time. They give his name; they tell how he should take the city; they describe the nature of its defences; they foretell his decree for the return of the Jews, and all in the clearest manner.

TYRE.

Perhaps no commercial city ever had greater wealth, or gave fairer promise of standing while the world shall stand, than ancient Tyre, in the days of Ezekiel. Yet by that prophet God declared that he would "make her like the top of a rock," and that she should "be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." Ezek. 26 : 4, 5. For centuries, every man who has visited the seat of ancient Tyre, and Volney among others, has seen no greater evidence of wealth than was found in the fish spread upon the rocks to be cured, and the nets spread to be dried.

THE ARABS.

The prophecies respecting the Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael, are in our day, as for more than three thousand years they have been, in a course of striking fulfilment. See Gen. 16 : 12. The Arab is still "a wild man." "His hand is still against every man, and every man's hand is still against him, and he still dwells in the presence of all his brethren," notwithstanding the mighty exertions which have been made to get rid of him.

CHRIST.

The prophecies respecting our Saviour predict his miraculous conception, the time and place of his birth, his lineage, his character, his miracles, his

doctrine, his rejection by the Jews, the manner of his death, and his resurrection, with a minuteness in many cases truly surprising. Yet all was fulfilled, even down to the words and acts of mockery used by his enemies at his death, and the division of his apparel among his crucifiers.

JERUSALEM.

The prophecy of our Saviour respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, limited that event to the generation then upon the earth. Matt. 24 : 34. In that generation it perished. He also said that in that event there should "be great tribulation, such as had not been from the beginning of the world to that time, no, nor ever should be." Matt. 24 : 21. No candid man can read Josephus' account of that event without consenting to the assertion, that he never read, or heard, or conceived of such suffering in any other case. See Jerusalem in her fallen condition for nearly eighteen centuries : "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people ! How is she become as a widow, she that was great among the nations !"

THE JEWS.

Look, too, at the dispersed, distressed, distinct state of the Jews, concerning whom God said that all these things should come upon them. Scattered to the ends of the earth, persecuted for many cen-

turies, their children, in many cases, taken from them in early life, to conceal their origin and change their religion, they still remain a suffering people; and to this day they are as distinct from all other people as when they lived in Judea. I need not dwell upon the prophecies concerning them. Let one of their own number tell their views on this matter.

Rabbi David Levi speaks of the proofs of "the exact accomplishment of every event foretold by Moses as affording such clear and unequivocal proofs of divine inspiration, as to strike the Deist and Infidel dumb." Again he says, "I am free to assert, no nation ever suffered the like, during a space of almost eighteen hundred years." Again, "If we enter into particulars, we shall find that punishments which he (Moses) denounced against them, (the Jews,) have been so exactly fulfilled in every particular, that it is no wonder if infidels have recourse to the old hackneyed objections, that the facts were prior to the predictions, and that the prophecies were written after the histories." Having given a brief view of these prophecies and their fulfilment, he says, "I must freely acknowledge, that they not only convince, but astonish and amaze me beyond utterance."*

On these two great pillars, miracles and prophecy, Christianity rests its weight. No friend of the truth

* Defence of the Old Testament, pp. 11, 15, 16, and 33.

ought for a moment to surrender either of them, or fail to defend them, when a proper opportunity offers. The merest outline of the argument from each has been given. If any one would know more on the subject, let him read several well-known works on miracles and prophecy.

COLLATERAL PROOFS.

But there are also many collateral sources of evidence, such as the majesty, the purity, the impartiality, and the harmony of the word of God. Each of these topics might be enlarged upon, and with much propriety. They are merely alluded to now for the purpose of saying that they are, in their place, important, and that they have summoned and won the confidence of thousands of the greatest and wisest men the world has ever seen.

Sir Isaac Newton, having, by the application of known principles of science, made known the distance and magnitude of the sun and many of his satellites, sat down to the study of the Bible, saying, "We account the Scriptures of God the sublimest philosophy."

Milton, of whose *Paradise Lost* Dr. Johnson says, "It is not the greatest of heroic poems, only because it is not the first," declares, "There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion."

A volume might be filled with similar testimonies to the unparalleled excellence of the sacred writings, which, as Mr. Locke says, "have God for their author, salvation for their end, and truth without any mixture of error, for their matter."

On this branch of the subject I take pleasure in recommending to the reader a work, published by the American Tract Society, entitled, "The Bible not of Man."

THE BIBLE MAKES MEN BETTER.

There are two effects produced by the Bible on the hearts of those who embrace it, which are peculiar to revelation. One is, elevated purity. "The law of the Lord converteth the soul." This effect is not confined to the less vicious part of mankind, but is witnessed also in the desperate, and outrageous, and lawless, who are brought under its power. Men as fierce as wild beasts, as cruel as death, as ungovernable as a storm, have often felt its purifying power. This has been the case from the first. An early Christian writer says, "Give me a man of a passionate, abusive, headstrong disposition; with a few only of the words of God, I will make him gentle as a lamb. Give me a greedy, avaricious, tenacious wretch; and I will teach him to distribute his riches with a liberal and unsparing hand. Give me a cruel and bloodthirsty monster; and all his rage shall be changed into true benignity. Give me

a man addicted to injustice, full of ignorance, and immersed in wickedness ; he shall soon become just, prudent, and innocent." Lactantius, Inst., l. 1, c. 26.

Such has ever been and still is the power of the Bible on the heart. The history of the true church of God, if correctly written, would be very much a succession of narratives of the power of Bible truth in converting and sanctifying the hearts of men. This effect is not produced by the Bible *in common* with other moral writings. Cicero was eloquent and studious. He wrote concerning the nature of God and the duties of life. But history has never yet recorded that his works converted one sinner from the error of his ways. The Bible alone, and books which embody the truths of the Bible, have this wonderful efficacy.

The human heart seems to say, "Paul I know, Jesus I know ; I feel the force of their teachings ; but who are ye, that come to me with your philosophy, and splendid poems, and powerful eloquence ? I may admire, but I will not obey you." Must not such a book be from God ?

THE BIBLE COMFORTS.

Another excellency of Christianity is, its power to console the afflicted mind. Compared with all other systems, and especially with infidel systems, how cold, and dark, and cheerless are they, and how quieting, animating, and enlivening is Christianity !

It tells us a thousand things to make us not only patient, but triumphant; not merely in some of the minor afflictions of life, but even when the cup of bitterness is full, and we are called to drink its dregs.

Instead of dealing in generals, allow me to state some cases.

VOLTAIRE AND HALYBURTON

I will contrast the feelings of the prince of infidelity with those of an humble yet learned and pious servant of God.

Voltaire says, "Who can, without horror, consider the whole world as the empire of destruction? It abounds with wonders; it abounds also with victims. It is a vast field of carnage and contagion. Every species is without pity pursued and torn to pieces through the air, and earth, and water. In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. He loves life, and yet he knows he must die. If he enjoys a transient good, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative. Other animals have it not. He spends the transient moments of his existence in diffusing the miseries which he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating, and being cheated; robbing, and being robbed; in serving that he might command; and in repenting of all he does.

The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains rather carcasses than men. I tremble at the review of this dreadful picture, and find it contains a complaint against providence itself. *I wish I had never been born.*" This is the testimony of him whom kings courted and nations flattered. This is the sum of all to him, "I wish I had never been born."

Turn we now to Halyburton, a good man, who loved his Maker and his Maker's word. In the midst of pain, he said, "I shall shortly get a very different sight of God from what I have ever had, and shall be made meet to praise him for ever and ever. O, the thoughts of an incarnate Deity are sweet and ravishing. O, how I wonder at myself that I do not love him more, and that I do not adore him more. What a wonder that I enjoy such composure under all my bodily pains, and in the view of death itself. What mercy, that having the use of my reason, I can declare his goodness to my soul. I long for his salvation. I bless his name that I have found him, and I die rejoicing in him. *O, blessed be God that I was born.* O that I was where he is. I have a father and mother, and ten brothers and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. O, there is a telling in this providence, and I shall be telling it for ever. If there be such a glory in his conduct towards me now, what will it be to see the Lamb in

the midst of the throne? *Blessed be God that I was born.*"

Here is a contrast indeed—a contrast in which the blind themselves may discern between the righteous and the wicked, the man that loves and the man that hates the word of God.

ANOTHER CONTRAST.

Take another example of each kind—Gibbon the historian, and Paul the apostle. Both of these men were accomplished scholars; both had great energy of character; both had given to the world writings which they had a right to expect would be read to the end of time; both had filled a large space in the public eye for a long time, and both attained to about the same age. Just before they left the world, they tell us their thoughts.

The closing paragraph of Mr. Gibbon's autobiography is in these words: "The present is a fleeting moment; the past is no more; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may *possibly* be my last; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow about fifteen yéars. I shall soon enter into that period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the elo-

quent historian of nature, [Buffon,] who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season, in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, and our fame and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind and body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time, the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life." Thus wrote the author of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and in a few months he died and left the world. As to Voltaire's "autumnal happiness," we have read his words, "I wish I had never been born."

Listen now to the language of Paul, standing on the verge of time. He says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."

The unbeliever in trouble is a reed shaken with the wind—he is tossed with tempest and not comforted. But he whose trust is in the living oracles of Jehovah, even when sorrow betides him, stands

“ As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm ;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

THE ARGUMENT CUMULATIVE.

Much of this evidence, instead of being weakened, is strengthened by the course of time. Every sinner who is converted, every poor believer who is cheered, every afflicted saint who is enabled to triumph, every new instance of the power of the Gospel in any form, and every continued or new fulfilment of prophecy, adds another strand to a cord, which is already strong enough to bind the consciences and the hearts of all the best men in the world. So that to the candid, humble, and intelligent believer, who shall live in that time when the Sun of righteousness shall ascend the heavens, and stand still a thousand years, and pour floods of light and love and redemption over all the earth, there will still be evidence abundant for his strong and triumphant faith in the oracles of God.

SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIONS.

ASTRONOMY.

It may be proper here to notice some objections, drawn from science, against the truth of the Bible. The first is, that the Bible speaks of the sun rising and setting, whereas modern astronomy shows that it does neither, but only seems to do so. To this it is sufficient to reply, that the Bible is not a book on science; that it uses popular language on the subjects on which it speaks; and that it would have been mere affectation in Newton or any other astronomer to have avoided such phrases as were in common use. Had the Bible used scientific language on this subject, all men, whose system of astronomy was wrong, must have rejected the Bible, or renounced their science; whereas the Bible attacks no system of astronomy and teaches none. It teaches God's will and man's duty in morals and religion; it professes to have no other objects in view, and yet, in teaching God's power, it says, "He hangeth the earth upon nothing."

But it is also said that modern astronomy gives a vastness to creation never understood by the readers of the Bible until taught by modern science. That may be so. But there is nothing in the Bible which opposes the idea that creative wisdom has its monuments throughout immensity. The Bible certainly uses as pious and elevated language concerning God

and his vast works of creation as if the inspired writers had been familiar with all the ideas we derive from the advancement of science. It is sufficient that the Bible says *nothing contrary* to what we have learned respecting these things. It does not profess to teach them. This would have been beside its great object, as much as arithmetic or chemistry is.

But some say, It is now pretty generally supposed that many other worlds besides ours are filled with intelligent inhabitants, and that the plan of salvation contemplates no reference to any other race of beings than the human family, and is thus on too small a scale to be worthy of God. That other planets have rational inhabitants is a mere inference from the analogy of this world—an analogy very limited, as all must confess, and never to be brought in serious argument against any better or solid grounds of knowledge. No wise man can hesitate, if the alternative be to renounce the Bible or give up the opinion that every heavenly body has its teeming millions of rational creatures. But there is no such alternative. Recent observations have pretty generally satisfied the learned that the moon, at least, is without inhabitants. It may be so with other worlds. The *science of astronomy* rests on *evidence*: the supposition that all worlds are intelligently peopled, is a *conjecture*—not wild, indeed, nor irrational, but still a conjecture. A man who

had tasted but one orange and found that sour, might very naturally, but by no means truly, infer that all were so. It is eminently philosophical to hold fast well-established principles against all that have less decisive marks of truth. Yet Christians, no less than others, admit the conjecture to have marks of probability.

Having admitted thus much, it is proper to say that the Bible does recognize the existence of other rational and immortal creatures besides man, some of them holy and some of them sinful, and both of them very numerous. They are spoken of as "legions," "thousands," and "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." The Scriptures admit that some of God's rational creatures were created before our world was, but they do not say how much older they are than we. Nor is there any evidence from revelation or philosophy that sin has ever corrupted any but the human race and a part of the angelic. The latter have been passed by without an offer of mercy.

A few public examples may as clearly display the nature of government as a thousand. So also, the grace and mercy offered to man may show that "God is love," as well as if the same were offered to a million of worlds. Besides, the Scriptures fully admit that, compared with the whole of God's dominions, man is an exceedingly small part of the creation, Psalm 8; and therefore the divine conde-

scension towards him is the more striking. The Bible also declares, that before this world was made, God contemplated it as the seat of wonderful exhibitions of the divine glory and perfections. Prov. 8.

Sin, we admit, breaks the golden chain that binds the family of God together ; but it is expressly declared in Scripture, that by Christ Jesus a new head is given to the family of God, and all unfallen and all redeemed creatures constitute for ever one glorious household under him. Thus new and glorious relations are introduced between God and all holy rational creatures. This is the grandest display of wisdom and goodness of which we have any knowledge. Eph. 1 : 8-10 ; Col. 1 : 20.

If the work of Christ has such effects on the rational creatures of whose existence we are assured, who can limit it to them ? The Bible puts no bounds to its effects in bringing glory to God and happiness to his creatures. Whatever may be the vastness of creation, there is nothing in the Bible discouraging the idea that the happiness of all unfallen creatures will be augmented by the work of Christ. Although those who have not sinned needed no redemption, yet their discoveries of God's glories may be far greater by this than by any other of his works ; and their relations to God, to one another, and to the rest of creation, may be not only novel, but full of increasing knowledge and glory for ever.

GEOLOGY.

Some ill-informed persons have *alleged* that there are discrepancies between the statements of the Bible and the teachings of geology concerning the creation, the flood, etc. The following remarks are believed to be sound, and fairly to meet any prejudices from this quarter.

1. I freely admit that there is such a science as geology ; yet no one, who is entitled to respect, will claim that it is demonstrative. It is admitted by its friends, to be yet incomplete as a science, and to be in a state of rapid advancement.

2. For a long time it has been coming nearer and nearer to the standard of revelation. Even the most scrutinizing of its devotees have yielded point after point, until it has lost, by the concessions of its friends, most, if not all its *supposed* discrepancy with revelation. A little further progress in the science will probably show, that its teachings wonderfully harmonize in all respects with the scriptural statements on the same subjects.

3. No class of respectable scientific men have probably been more hasty and rash in making assertions, than some geologists. Buffon set the example. He supposed that the earth and moon had been rived off from the sun by the stroke of a comet, and that the momentum and motion thus received caused the moon to revolve around the earth, and both the earth and moon to revolve around the sun. He

supposed that the fiery vapors brought from the sun condensed into water, and produced the ocean. Thus he proceeded from folly to folly, though with quite an air of confidence, and with an eloquence extremely captivating. It is hardly necessary to inform the reader that no respectable writer, now living, embraces the theory of Buffon above alluded to.

4. The assertions of some geologists are hardly more surprising than the facility with which one abandons ground formerly taken and confidently maintained by another, or even by himself. This necessarily results from the low state of the science, and the uncertainty of many principles said to belong to it; and has often, though improperly, led some sober men to doubt whether geology has any claims to the rank and dignity of a science. Volumes would be required to show the sudden and total changes which have been made in a short time on this subject.

5. Men make unreasonable drafts on our belief, when they demand our credence to the assertion, that all processes of organization and induration, which have ever gone on, have proceeded as slowly as those we now witness on or near the surface of the earth. If they but admit that the laws of matter are distinct and different from the properties of matter, and that the laws of nature are nothing but the usual modes of divine operation in nature, how can they show that God, in the early periods of the

world, did not give unusual celerity or efficiency to these laws? This view alone would preserve all that is essential in the distinction between creation and providence. If there were no Bible, we could not, without forfeiting a title to a truly scientific state of mind, ask less or yield more on this and some other points.

6. Christianity has fairly stood the test in regard to every true principle of real science which has yet been established, although oftentimes ignorant and timid friends, and ignorant and insolent enemies, have been led to suppose there was a discrepancy. It will be so with geology. Of this we have the strongest assurance in the large and valuable contributions to natural theology made by this science. Between natural and revealed religion there is the firmest union and the best agreement. That which is really friendly to one, cannot be inimical to the other. The result always has proved it, and always will prove it.

7. Geology has clearly settled the point that animal organization and life have not been eternal, and that there is no evidence that the human family has been in existence much more than five or six thousand years. From the time of Cuvier down, these things have not been seriously questioned. Thus, in the argument with a large number of sceptics, we have an advantage of great importance.

8. Nor is there any thing in Scripture, which as-

serts that animals never died until man sinned, or that they would not have died if man had not sinned ; though it is freely admitted that man himself would have been immortal, if he had not, by transgression, lost the favor of God. The Bible does not even assert, although it may be true, that there are circumstances revolting to our feelings often attending the death of animals, beyond what would have attended their dissolution if man had not sinned.

9. Nor is there any thing in revelation which forbids us to believe that the substance of the earth was formed long before it received its present organization. The first verse of Genesis may relate to a period millions of ages prior to the events noticed in the rest of the chapter. Commentators, who wrote hundreds, and some of them fifteen hundred years ago, seem to have understood the first verse as relating to a period far anterior to the creation of man. This interpretation, therefore, is not modern, nor made merely to obviate a difficulty. But if it were, it is so perfectly coincident with the just rules of interpretation, that there can be no just objection to it.

10. Nor do any considerable number of respectable geologists now resort to the supposition favored by Parkinson, Cuvier, and Jameson, that the six days of creation were six periods of indefinite, or, at least, of vast duration. The word *day* does not

necessarily, or always, in Scripture, signify a period of twenty-four hours. But there are serious difficulties from other quarters in giving this interpretation to this part of Scripture. The objections to this "device of interpretation," as a respectable geologist calls it, are so great that sober critics have entirely rejected it, and a large majority of the best geologists now think such an interpretation uncalled for by any facts known in their favorite science.

11. Geologists generally admit that there is abundant evidence that the earth everywhere bears marks of having been subjected to a deluge. Cuvier, after a long statement of facts and reasonings on the subject, says, "I think, therefore, with Deluc and Dolomieu, that if there be any thing settled in geology, it is this, that the surface of our globe has been subjected to a great and sudden revolution, the date of which cannot be carried much farther back than five or six thousand years."

12. Every passage of Scripture has been so explained, or can be so explained, in perfect consistency with the established laws of exegesis, as not in the slightest degree to interfere with the settled or generally received principles of geology.

The foregoing remarks are sufficient to put to rest all fears which have been entertained in any quarter from the science of geology. It would require only time to fortify every one of them with the proof believed to be appropriate to the subject.

The question here arises, "How comes any man to reject the belief of the Scriptures?" In other words,

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF INFIDELITY?

If we answer this question generally, we may say, "Free-living is the father of freethinking." Corrupt manners are the basis of infidelity. A wicked heart is the nursery of a wicked creed. The Bible opposes all sin, secret and open. A heart in love with sin, therefore, naturally opposes the Bible. This is the method adopted in the Scriptures themselves of accounting for infidelity. Peter, 2 Epis. 3 : 3, says, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." These men he describes as making some attempts at argument, and yet the very effort at reasoning is so filled with impiety and insolence that it is properly denominated "scoffing." The reason for this "scoffing" is also given. It is an expression of the enmity of those who "walk after their own lusts," that is, they are men of irregular and licentious lives; not all to an equal degree or in like manner, perhaps, but all really so. In 1 Tim. 1 : 19, Paul says, "Some have put away a good conscience," that is, they have fallen into sin. What was the consequence? This, "Concerning the faith they have made shipwreck." Sin made them renounce the Gospel. Christ himself said, "How can ye believe, who receive honor one

of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" In many places the Scriptures assert that the truth is rejected on account of a wicked life.

MEN DO NOT GATHER GRAPES FROM THORNS.

It is also true, that men are not surprised at any immorality in one known to them only as an infidel, while all are surprised at the same in one known to them only as a professor of Christianity. The reason of this is, that a mind at all informed does not expect men to be restrained except in accordance with their principles. Where is the chapter in infidelity, which, under any adequate sanctions, forbids lewdness, profanity, and dishonesty, or which requires "a chaste conversation," reverent speech, and whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report? No such doctrine is found in it. In other words, mankind do not expect to gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. The morality of infidels is owing to education, to habit, or to public opinion, and never to their infidel principles. So far as they have good moral principles, they are indebted to Christianity for them. Infidelity, in this respect, always ploughs with a borrowed or stolen heifer. But let us descend to particulars. We shall then find a sufficient cause in the moral character of the most noted infidels for their rejection of the Bible.

SINFUL IGNORANCE.

Peter charges "wilful ignorance" upon the infidels of his day. It is no less chargeable upon their more modern followers. Where was there ever an infidel, who was well informed on the subject of religion? Hume always carefully eschewed the Bible as a book unworthy of him. Paine never read the whole Bible, and when he wrote the first part of his *Age of Reason*, he says he had not examined the Testament, meaning, no doubt, the New Testament. Mr. Gibbon, first a Catholic and then a Protestant, and then an infidel, and then a Protestant, was as ignorant of the Bible as Hume or Paine.

History does tell us of some celebrated infidels, who, in order to be able to attack Christianity in her vitals, undertook to search the Scriptures, and make themselves masters of their doctrines. But so far from being confirmed in infidelity, they were converted through the truth they had learned, and wrote ably in defence of Christianity. One of them was Gilbert West, whose work on the resurrection of Christ has always been regarded with great respect. Another was Lord Lyttelton, whose argument for the truth of Christianity, drawn from the conversion of Saint Paul, remains without any respectable attempt to answer it. This gentleman, towards the close of his life, used to lay his hand upon his Bible, and say, "A wicked life is the only

grand objection to this book." It is also said of Soame Jenyns, author of the able treatise on the Internal Evidence of the Genuineness of the New Testament, that he was in like manner convinced, while searching for arguments to prove it spurious.

Christianity challenges investigation. Nor ought men to be offended at her demanding that the investigation be candid and thorough. To most, if not all modern infidels, who have attacked Christianity, might be applied the cutting advice of Fielding, who recommends that before writing on any subject, a man should gain some information concerning it.

BAD TEMPER OF INFIDELS.

' The indulgence of bad passions on the whole subject of religion shuts many up to infidelity. "Infidels," says Cecil, "are loose, fierce, overbearing men. There is nothing in them like sober and serious inquiry. They are the wildest fanatics on earth."

A poet, having read Paine's *Age of Reason*, wrote on a blank leaf the following just though severe stanza :

" At every page divine his rancor teems,
This hour he reasons, and the next blasphemes ;
Marking each text with a censorious eye,
That gives his practice, or his pride, the lie."

Violent contempt is very much the style in which

infidels have ever treated the whole subject of religion. Mr. Jefferson, when writing on law, and liberty, and politics, is calm, serious, dignified, and very forcible ; but when writing on the subject of religion, he never fails to lose his temper or display his vanity. See his works.

Infidels, feeling that the Bible makes war on their sinful lusts and practices, in self-defence make war on it ; and being unable to conduct the contest in manly dignity, they fall into a passion, and soon begin to rave. Indeed, malevolent passions constitute no small part of infidel character. Paine was habitually violent and ungovernable in his temper. Slight opposition enraged him. The same was true of Voltaire. Nothing made him more your enemy than a refusal to flatter his vanity. To curry favor, he professed any thing. "At London he was a Freethinker, at Versailles a Cartesian, at Nancy a Christian, at Berlin an infidel." The nature of his opposition to Christianity may be judged by the fact that he often closed his letters and notes to his friends with the words, "Crush the wretch," meaning Jesus Christ. Is it wonderful that such men should reject a religion whose first great lesson is, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted ;" a religion which denounces vainglory under the penalty of damnation, and pronounces hatred of mankind, or of the truth, to be an infallible mark of enmity to God ?

PRIDE.

Pride, especially pride of learning, has made many a man an infidel. Learning itself, if sound and thorough, tends to correct this pride. Lord Bacon has well said, "It is an assured truth, and a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the mind of man to atheism, but a farther proceeding therein doth bring the mind back again to religion. For in the entrance of philosophy, when the second causes, which are next unto the senses, do offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause ; but when a man passeth on farther, and seeth the dependence of causes and the works of Providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair."

It is a singular fact that anatomy and astronomy, two sciences which do in a most remarkable manner prove that God is, and that he is good, and wise, and mighty, should, through the pride of superficially learned men, have so often led to atheism. The influence of science on minds truly great and truly humble has been exactly the reverse of this, of which Bacon himself, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Robert Boyle, John Locke, and John Milton are illustrious examples. Because nothing is more opposed to God, therefore he opposes nothing more

than pride. "God resisteth the proud." All that knowledge which puffeth up the mind is both narrow and perverted. But "God giveth grace to the humble." "The meek will he guide in judgment." There is as much propriety as authority in the counsel, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth the LORD." In proof of the pertinency of these remarks to the character of infidels, let the history of almost any celebrated infidel be examined, especially that of Hume, Voltaire, and Gibbon. Mr. Hume's philosophy is known to have carried him to the greatest lengths. He balked at nothing. One of his principles led him so far as gave just occasion to a person to inscribe on the circular slab over his grave these lines:

"Beneath this circular *idea*,
 Vulgarly called a *tomb*,
Impressions and ideas rest,
 Which *constituted* Hume."

SINGULARITY.

Some men are also led to embrace infidel principles through an affectation of singularity. We see this cause powerfully at work among men in regard to dress, equipage, and a thousand things. Few things have a greater effect on a part of our race than the conceit that they are or ought to be dis-

tinguished from the mass of mankind. This principle mightily prevailed, both in Europe and America, when French infidelity was at its height, and when men seemed to think that to be as wicked as Voltaire, or Paine, or Rousseau, would make them no less distinguished. A man who will address mankind in bold paradox, will not lack auditors or admirers.

“It is,” says Burke, “an observation which I think Isocrates makes in one of his orations against the sophists, that it is far more easy to maintain a wrong cause, and to support paradoxical opinions to the satisfaction of a common auditory, than to establish a doubtful truth by solid and conclusive arguments. When men find that something can be said in favor of what, on the very proposal, they have thought utterly indefensible, they grow doubtful of their own reason; they are thrown into a pleasing surprise; they run along with a speaker, charmed and captivated to find such a plentiful harvest of reasoning, where all seemed barren and unpromising. This is the fairy land of philosophy.”

To utter the most solid, though familiar truths, is often the most tedious employment. But to dismiss all tedious common-places, and soar even to the regions of absurdity, is at least a *bold* enterprise, and attracts attention on the same principles as the flights of aëronauts. To a portion of mankind, hardly any thing is more unpleasant

than to conceive of themselves as being, thinking, and acting like their neighbors. All such are ready to be led captive by the first wild theory that is presented. Every sober man has witnessed many illustrations of this remark.

HEALTH AND PROSPERITY.

So also, a wicked mind turns every thing into a wrong channel, and perverts every blessing. Thus, firm health and the glow of ardor consequent upon it, especially united with much general prosperity, make many a man an infidel or an atheist. Dr. Young somewhere says,

“ ’Tis health that keeps the atheist in the dark,
A fever argues better than a Clarke ;
Let but the logic in his pulse decay,
The Grecian he'll renounce, and learn to pray.”

An inspired writer, speaking of such, says, “They are not in trouble as other men; their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They set their mouth against the heavens. They say, How doth God know?” Ps. 73. So the “*scoffers*” spoken of in Scripture argued that the world had stood so long it would stand for ever, and that no account would ever be given to God. “The wish was father to the thought.”

COVETOUSNESS.

Nor can it be denied that the wicked gains which some men are reaping, much incline them to reject a system which utters terrible denunciations against usury, covetousness, fraud, extortion, and all unjust gain. This was the grand objection of Demetrius and the other silversmiths mentioned in Acts 19: "This our craft is in danger." Men who are fully purposed to acquire wealth by means which they know the Bible condemns, must be miserable or renounce the word of God as a rule of life. Thus men, who for gain separate husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, do uniformly in practice, and generally in theory, renounce the Gospel. "They that *will* be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

GENERAL LICENTIOUSNESS.

The Bible also lays the axe at the root of the tree of all sinful pleasures, and therefore its messages are hated and opposed. On the very frontlet of Christianity is inscribed, "Deny thyself—take thy cross." Could any thing be more repulsive to the devotee of carnal delight? Mr. Hume calls self-denial a "monkish virtue." Emerson and Paine were habitual and beastly drunkards. Rousseau, the accomplished Rousseau, has written his own

biography, in which he "confesses" that he was through life both a thief and a liar. His language is, "I have been a rogue, and am so still sometimes for trifles which I had rather take than ask for." For a "subsistence," at Turin, he renounced the Protestant religion, and became, as he says, "both a dupe and an apostate." He lived a life of infamy with Madame de Warrens, "finding," says he, "in her all those ideas I had occasion for." He then lived in infamy with one, whom he calls Theresa, and says he "cheerfully adopted without the least scruple," the saying of one, "that he who best filled the foundling-hospital was always the most applauded." At Geneva he openly returned to the profession of the Protestant religion, "because," says he, "I thought it was the exclusive right of the sovereign power in every country to fix the mode of worship, and these unintelligible opinions."

He subsequently engaged in another intrigue, of which he says, "Guilty without remorse, I soon became so without measure." He not only stole, but on one occasion laid his theft to a female servant, who thereby lost her place. Yet so blinded, so perverted, so wicked was he, that he says, "Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the Sovereign Judge with this book ['Confessions of J. J. Rousseau'] in my hand, and loudly proclaim, Thus have I acted; these were my thoughts; such was I, Power Eternal! Assem-

ble around thy throne the innumerable throng of my fellow-mortals. Let them listen to my confessions; let them blush at my depravity; let them tremble at my sufferings; let each in his turn expose, with equal sincerity, the failings, the wanderings of his heart; and, if he dare, aver 'I was better than that man.' ”

No wonder that such men should reject a system which requires truth, honesty, chastity, temperance, the love of man, and the fear of God.

AMBITION.

Nor does the Christian system tolerate ambition in any of its forms. On the contrary, it says, “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.” “Mind not high things.” Love not “to have the preëminence.” “Let each esteem other better than themselves.” “In honor, prefer one another.” Mr. Hume’s great objection to the principles of Christianity is, that they repress ambition and produce moderation, humility, and the passive virtues, to an extent which he considers undesirable. No doubt almost the whole line of the great and masculine virtues, constancy, gravity, magnanimity, fortitude, fidelity, and firmness, are, *if spurious*, closely allied to obstinacy; but if genuine and holy, nothing is farther removed from it.

The Roman governors saw nothing but “obstinacy” in the holy martyrs, who died imploring

blessings on their persecutors, but this was because the martyrs had principles as unknown to their enemies as to modern infidels. "The secret of the Lord was with them." They were his "hidden ones." But "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;" and he has no spiritual discernment, but is, as to holy things, like a "brute beast."

LEWDNESS OF INFIDELS.

Infidels are often such because of the hostility of the Christian religion to every form of obscenity, vulgarity, and depravity of manners and conversation. No wonder that Voltaire was an infidel, for even when writing on the most sacred subjects, he uses the most coarse and polluted language. No man who has any regard to his reputation, would dare to read aloud in company scores of pages in his infidel writings. He practised the sin of the heathen and of Sodom. No *gentleman* would even repeat to another many things found in the writings of Paine.

DEPRAVED PRINCIPLES.

The causes of infidelity in particular men may often be learned from their writings. The philosophic Hume has written an essay asserting one's right over his own life, even to take it away at pleasure. He seems to be unable to understand how it can

be any crime to change the course of a few ounces of blood. He has also written another essay to prove that the seventh commandment is not binding on either sex. No wise man will be surprised to find this advocate of suicide and adultery shockingly profane in his correspondence with his friends, even with a clergyman. Much less can any fail to see in these principles of his a sufficient cause for his infidelity.

Lord Bolingbroke says, the only thing which can reconcile a man to any other state of marriage than that of polygamy, is, that it is a mere civil institution, not of binding moral force. Dr. Johnson says, "Chesterfield taught the manners of a dancing-master, and the morals of a prostitute." Mr. Hobbes maintained that the law of the land "was the sole foundation of right and wrong, and that even religion had no obligation but as enjoined by the magistrate:" in other words, that our Creator and Preserver has not any right to control our actions, unless his authority be seconded and supported by human governments. Even Lord Herbert, the most decent of all the English infidels, apologizes for lewdness. Godwin both defended and practised lewdness. The proof of his guilt is his own confession.

WANT OF THE LOVE OF TRUTH.

Christianity declares that "all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brim-

stone," and denounces all insincerity of speech and behavior. How troublesome all such rules must be to infidels, may be judged of by the following facts.

Voltaire requested D'Alembert to tell a known and palpable falsehood, by denying that he [Voltaire] was the author of the Philosophical Dictionary. D'Alembert, in reply, informed him that he had told the lie.

Shaftsbury, Collins, and Gibbon did not hesitate to qualify themselves for office by partaking of the Lord's supper in the established church of England, although neither of them believed it ordained by God.

The truth is, that infidels are not addicted to martyrdom, or even to suffering slight civil disabilities, for the maintenance of their doctrines. A large portion of the loose infidels of the days of Charles II. had, during the commonwealth, prayed as long and as loud, and talked as whiningly and looked as demurely as the fashion of the times seemed to demand. Christianity has poured out in triumph the blood of millions of her disciples in attestation of her divinity; but infidelity has nothing which she regards as worth bleeding for.

It is probably a truth, that the world has never yet seen a candid, honest infidel, one free from all hypocrisy. Very generally they give the kiss of friendship to Christianity, and meanly aim their malignant thrusts at her heart.

Herbert declared that he had no intention to attack Christianity, which he calls the best religion. He represents it as the great design of the Gospel to establish those great principles in which he makes religion properly to consist.

Hobbes acknowledges that the writings of the New Testament are as ancient as the times of the apostles; that they were written by persons who lived in those times, some of whom saw the things which they relate; and that they are the true registers of those things which were done and said by the prophets and apostles.

Blount acknowledges that it is not safe to trust to deism alone, if Christianity be not joined with it. "Undoubtedly," says he, "in our travels to the other world, the common road is the safest. And though deism is a good manuring of a man's conscience, yet certainly, if sowed with Christianity, it will produce the most plentiful crop."

Toland says it was not his intention to invalidate, but to illustrate and confirm the canon of the New Testament.

Shaftsbury insisted that he faithfully embraced the mysteries of our holy religion, notwithstanding their amazing depth.

Collins represents the cause in which he was engaged, as the cause of virtue, learning, truth, God, religion, and Christianity.

Tindal says, Christianity, stripped of the additions

that policy, mistakes, and the circumstances of time have made to it, is a most holy religion, and all its doctrines plainly speak themselves to be the will of an infinitely wise and good God.

Morgan speaks of "our Saviour's doctrines" as "the true and genuine principles of nature and reason." He declares, that "men ought to be thankful for the light of the Gospel."

Chubb puts to one of his infidel tracts this title, "THE TRUE GOSPEL OF CHRIST ASSERTED."

Another entitled his infidel book, "CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION."

Bolingbroke says, "The system of religion which Christ published, and his evangelists recorded, is a complete system to all purposes of religion, natural and revealed."

Hume, in the conclusion of his essay on miracles, says his piece "may serve to confound those dangerous friends, or disguised enemies of the Christian religion, who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason." He adds, "Our most holy religion is founded on faith, and not on reason."

Gibbon speaks of Christianity as "a divine revelation," and says its success was primarily owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author.

Carlyle claims that Christianity stands on higher ground than miracles, and shows great zeal in the cause.

Indeed, time would fail us to show the innumerable falsehoods, deceits, and instances of hypocrisy in the lives and writings of infidels, even when acting most deliberately and solemnly.

GENERAL INFERENCE.

The conclusion to which we come from such a review, is well expressed by a writer of the last generation: "Modern unbelievers are deists in theory, pagans in inclination, and atheists in practice." It has happened to them as St. Augustine has spoken generally: "He, who knows what is right and does it not, loses his power of discerning what is right. He, who will not do right when he can, loses his capacity to do it when he would." Some one has truly said, that if infidels should retain their present inclinations, and should find that the demonstration of the 47th proposition of Euclid, instead of proving what it does, should prove that men ought to love and obey God, they would pretend to find some flaw in the argument, and declare the reasoning inconclusive. All history, bearing on the subject, shows that this statement is not too strong.

INFIDELITY WORTHLESS, DESTRUCTIVE.

Suppose we renounce Christianity, what can infidelity do for us? What good lessons can it teach us concerning God, the Creator, Preserver, and Bene-

factor of men? It declares none of his attributes in half so clear and glorious a manner as the Bible does. Concerning some of them it is silent. It neither asserts nor explains his perfect universal government. It neither travels back to the counsels of eternity, nor down along the unending course of duration. It can never determine those grand controversies, on the right settlement of which even the more sober heathen philosophers admitted human happiness to depend. It neither explains nor asserts the reasonableness of the principles of human accountability. It prescribes none of the proper offices of life, nor regulates the delicate duties of society. Instead of expelling superstition, it fosters it, as is proven by the history of every people who have renounced the Bible, in whole or in part. It inflames the ferocious, it disheartens the timid, it makes the wise simple, it debases the humble, and exalts the proud. It is wholly at a loss what to say about retribution, but commonly denies it. It is cold and dark, and cheerless and hopeless. To a guilty sinner it offers no good ground of hope that he may obtain pardon. It is silent about "atoning blood." It has no sin-offering in its creed. In actual results in morals, we have seen some of its effects on men who commonly had many worldly influences to restrain them within the bounds of decency, and yet we have seen them practising the most shameful vices. On the lower classes, the masses of men not

thus restrained, it has, if possible, a still more demoralizing effect.

A CASE.

Mr. Mallet, the infidel, had a servant, who waited at his table, and there heard, day after day, the dogmas of infidelity, until he well understood and could defend them. "Being thoroughly convinced that for any of his misdeeds he should have no after-account to make, he was resolved to profit by the doctrine, and made off with many things of value, particularly the plate. He was, however, so closely pursued, that he was brought back with his prey to his master's house, who examined him before some select friends. At first, the man was sullen, and would answer no questions; but being urged to give a reason for his infamous behavior, he resolutely said, 'I had heard you so often talk of the impossibility of a future state, and that after death there was no reward for virtue, nor punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery.' 'Well, but, you rascal,' replied Mallet, 'had you no fear of the gallows?' 'Sir,' said he, looking sternly at his master, 'what is that to you? If I had a mind to venture that, you had removed my greatest terror: why should I fear the least?'"

Every experiment yet made on the pure principles of infidelity has proved a failure. Robert Dale Owen with his "Harmony Society," and Dr. Cooper

with the college of South Carolina, were but samples of what the world has ever seen when men have esteemed themselves wiser than God. Jannes and Jambres, the leading magicians of Egypt, seemed for a little time to be able to withstand Moses; but ere long "their folly was manifest."

FRANCE.

The experiment made in France, near the close of the last century, ought to have succeeded, if any trial of infidelity could result in aught but shame. France was the fairest portion of Europe. Science flourished astonishingly. The leaders were men of prodigious talents. Christianity was abolished. The Sabbath was set aside. Infidelity stood forth alone, wielding the sceptre over thirty millions. The glorious age and reign of reason was announced to mankind. The millennium of philosophy was said to have commenced. The first thing done by the great nation was to prostitute her virtue, the second was to abandon every measure that could promote her well-being. Then every fastness of society gave way, and France "got drunk on blood to vomit crime." The voice of law was drowned by the screams of brutal men and more brutal women, clamoring for vengeance. The reign of reason became the reign of terror. To terror succeeded horror, and to horror desperation and madness. The whole experiment was on the greatest scale, and

brought forth the most appalling results. The lesson was to mankind. Let him that readeth understand. Nor is there in any correct history any account of a successful experiment made on purely infidel principles. There can be none such, any more than there can be good health in a community, in which the plague is raging.

DEATHS OF INFIDELS.

No man has any more strength, no principle has any more value than a fair trial evinces. Infidelity has always failed to give support in the hour of darkness.

When Mr. Hobbes was alone, he was haunted with the most tormenting reflections, and if, on awaking in the night, he found his candle gone out, he expressed great terror. He could not bear any discourse on death. It seemed to him a most unwelcome subject. As death approached, he confessed that he "was about to take a leap in the dark."

When Volney was caught in a dreadful storm on one of our lakes, he was among the first to give signs of alarm, and to fall on his knees; yet when the storm was over, he meanly said, in excuse of his prayers, that his mother had put some notions into his head that he could not get rid of.

Voltaire, the great apostle of modern infidelity, when he came to die, was in the greatest horror.

When the physician came, he exclaimed, "I am abandoned by God and man. Doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months." The physician replied, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks." Voltaire answered, "Then I shall go to hell, and you will go with me," and soon after expired.

Diderot and D'Alembert died hardly, if at all, less terribly. Paine's latter end was full of misery. He alternately cursed God, and prayed to Jesus Christ for "help." Emerson, towards the close of his life, crawled about the floor, at one time praying, and at another swearing. Newport's last words were, "Oh, the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation."

Many have died in our own country, but none of them pleasantly, most of them terribly. Dr. Cooper, in a letter written shortly before his death, says, "My shortness of breath is not now distressing; my legs swell painfully by bedtime. I walk with some difficulty from one room to the opposite. It is possible I may live over this spring. I greatly disapprove of all kinds of clerical religion, as I do of the whole clerical body everywhere. Of a future state I have no evidence. Knowing, therefore, *nothing about it*, I shall die *believing nothing, hoping nothing, fearing nothing, caring nothing*." I suppose this is as near an approach to a tolerable death as the annals of infidelity afford. Yet, by his own confes-

sion, he had "no hope in his death." It seems, too, that like the timid boy walking by a graveyard, who whistles to keep his courage up, so the doctor was not satisfied with "caring nothing about a future state," but he must say so to encourage his indifference.

Some may say, however, that Hume "died like a philosopher." On this subject it is proper to say, that Adam Smith's account of that matter differs very widely from that of the very respectable female who waited on him, and who had a far better opportunity of observing the state of his mind in his last days than any one else. But admit Dr. Smith's account to be true, is it dying like a philosopher to play at cards and crack jokes about Charon and his boat as one is about to enter eternity? If so, rather let me die on a gibbet, in penitence for my sins. Even if death be esteemed an eternal sleep, surely it is too solemn a sleep to laugh about at any time, and especially as one is about to fall into it. Dr. Johnson correctly says of Mr. Hume, "Here was a man who had been at no pains to inquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death should alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right. He had a vanity in being thought easy."

The poet Montgomery has well described the dying sceptic and the dying Christian.

THE DYING SCEPTIC.

Lo there, in yonder fancy-haunted room,
What muttered curses tremble through the gloom,
When pale, and shivering, and bedewed with fear,
The dying sceptic felt his hour drew near ;
From his parched tongue no meek hosanna fell,
No bright hope kindled at his faint farewell :
As the last throes of death convulsed his cheek,
He gnashed, and scowled, and raised a hideous shriek,
Rounded his eyes into a ghastly glare,
Locked his white lips—and all was mute despair.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN.

Go, child of darkness ! see a Christian die !
No horror pales his lips, or dims his eye ;
No fiend-shaped phantoms of destruction start
The hope religion pillows on his heart,
When with a faltering hand he waves adieu
To all who love so well, and weep so true :
Meek, as an infant to the mother's breast
Turns, fondly longing for its wonted rest,
He pants for where congenial spirits stray,
Turns to his God, and sighs his soul away.

The infidel system, so full of darkness, guilt, and misery, so destitute of purity in life or hope in death, cannot proceed from a God of truth, of goodness, of holiness, of justice, and of mercy. Nor can it be pleasing to him. It is a system of malignant doctrines, malignant practices, and malignant results.

REMARKS.

1. If the Bible be true, it is awfully so to the wicked. Its truths are not to be trifled with, made a jest of, held in unrighteousness of life, or coldly received. It is no objection to Christianity that its consistent professors are solemn and in earnest. It is to the disgrace of infidelity that its professors indulge levity in nothing more than on sacred subjects.

2. If the Bible be true, it is, to the humble, good man, delightfully so. If it has a rod laid up for the indolent, it has also manna laid up for the hungry. If it turns a dark side towards the wicked, it turns a very bright side towards the pious. Its promises are as brilliant as its threatenings are terrible. Let the people of God shout aloud for joy, for "all the promises do travail," and their redemption draweth nigh. Let the inhabitant of this rock of truth sing.

3. In view of all these things, it is not uncharitable to believe infidels in Christian countries to be, on the subject of religion, uncandid while indulging opposition to Christianity. By word and deed they have often confessed as much. Colonel Ethan Allen of New England, was an officer in the war of American Independence. He was brave, he was patriotic, he was gifted, he was an infidel. Having fought the enemies of his country, he made war on the Lamb, and wrote with much subtlety a work

against Christianity. He was also a husband and a father. In the course of time an interesting daughter was taken sick. It soon became apparent to her physician, her parents, and herself, that she had but a short time to live. In these solemn circumstances she made an appeal to her father, an infidel, and to her mother, a Christian, not to deceive her, but to tell her whether she should believe the infidel or the Christian system. The mother, from emotion or from prudence, was silent. In the father, parental love gained the ascendancy over infidel passion and prejudice, and he said, "My daughter, believe your mother. She has told you the truth."

Jesus Christ gave a righteous judgment, when he said that infidels in all places where the Gospel was made known, should finally be judged and their destinies determined according to the standard which they reject, because they had no good reason for rejecting it. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12: 48.

4. Let Christians, as they have opportunity, inform themselves on the subject of the truth of Christianity. Let them be able to show that they "have not followed cunningly devised fables." Let them read and study both the Bible and the evidences of Christianity, not that they may become fiery disputants, but that they may be ready with

meekness of wisdom to “give a reason of the hope that is in them.”

5. Especially, let all who love the truth live according to it, and by “well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” By humility, by kindness, by forgiveness of injuries, by courage under trials, by charity, by the Holy Ghost, it can be proven now as in former times, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Something like a show of answer may be given to all the evidences adduced in favor of the truth of the Bible; but infidels commonly find it very difficult to satisfy themselves with their answers to the argument drawn from the present evidence of a holy life and blameless conversation in God’s people.

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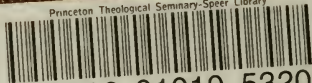
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